

Andrews University Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Lake Union Herald

Lake Union Herald

6-2009

Water: Essential for Good Health

Winston J. Craig

Andrews University, wcraig@andrews.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/luh-pubs>



Part of the [International and Community Nutrition Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Craig, Winston J., "Water: Essential for Good Health" (2009). *Lake Union Herald*. 474.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/luh-pubs/474>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Lake Union Herald at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Lake Union Herald by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.



FAMILY TIES

Let's Talk About Happiness

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

"There is no surprise more magical than the surprise of being loved. It is God's finger on man's shoulder." —Charles Morgan

There's much to be said about happiness. It leads to feeling and expressing positive emotions; it's good for our heart; and it brings joy to others. It feels good! However, happiness is about more than feeling good.

Those seriously studying happiness describe it as "subjective well-being" and deal with the conceptualization, measurement, prevalence, explanation, evaluation, imagination and study of happiness. The research covers both cognitive evaluations of life (life-satisfaction) and affective enjoyment of life (such as mood level).

Research on happiness shows that early in adult life American women are more likely than men to feel satisfied and be happier, while in later life these gender differences turn around. After the age of 48, men are more satisfied with their financial situation and family life, and are the happier of the two genders.

Nine out of 10 people of both genders report desiring a happy marriage. Men report being saddest in their 20s, when they are more likely to be single and have less stable financial situations. By the age of 34, men are more likely to be married than women. Of course, one doesn't have to be married to be happy; but if someone really wants to be married and they aren't, that has an impact on overall happiness.

Gratitude, the emotion of thankfulness and joy, is one of the essential ingredients for living a good life, states Todd Kashdan, one of the first to teach a college class on the science of happiness. He found that women, compared with men, report feeling less burden and obligation and greater levels of gratitude when presented with gifts. "The way that we get socialized as children affects what we do with our emotions as adults," says Todd. "Because men are generally taught to control and conceal their softer emotions, this may be limiting their well-being." If he had to name three elements that are essential for creating happiness and meaning in life, they would be meaningful relationships,

gratitude and living in the present moment with an attitude of openness and curiosity.

Happiness is infectious. People are embedded in social networks, and the health and well-being of one person affects the well-being and health of others. Did you know that a friend who is happy and lives within a mile increases your likelihood of happiness by 25 percent? Spouses who report being happy increase the likelihood of their partner being happy by eight percent; similar effects were seen for siblings who live close by (14 percent) and neighbors (34 percent). Work colleagues did not affect happiness levels, suggesting that social context may curtail the spread of emotional states.

Christians are expected to be happy, and most report being so. There are promises and encouragement in Scripture. Proverbs 17:22 tells us, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones." Web sites, books and articles can be helpful. We also need to spend some time in self-reflection, have the conversations with important people in our lives, set goals and celebrate.

Here are some things to think and talk about: What is your source of happiness? If women report being happier in earlier life, and men a bit later, how might that affect your marital relationship, and your relationship with your parents and siblings? If you are a man, does the expression of gratitude come easily for you? When was the last time you really thought about what makes you happy? Do your friends and family know?

Susan Murray is an associate professor of family studies who teaches behavioral science and social work at Andrews University. She is a certified family life educator and a licensed marriage and family therapist.

Sources for the research referred to in this article are available in the online version at www.lakeunionherald.org.